

# Investigating an organization and a job opportunity

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## WHERE TO LOOK AND WHAT YOU CAN LEARN

- Company website: Overall information about the company, including key executives, products and services, locations and divisions, employee benefits, and job descriptions
- Competitors' websites: Similar information from competitors, including the strengths those companies claim to have
- Industry-related websites: Objective analysis and criticism of the company, its products, its reputation, and its management
- Marketing materials (brochures, catalogs, etc): The company's marketing strategy and customer communication style
- Company publications (both print and electronic): Key events, stories about employees, and new products
- Blogs: Analysis and criticism (not always fair or unbiased) of the company, its products and services, its reputation, and its management
- Social networks: Names and job titles of potential contacts in a company
- Periodicals (newspapers and trade journals, both print and online): In-depth stories about the company and its strategies, products, successes, and failures; you may find profiles of top executives
- Career center at your college: A wide array of information about companies that hire graduates
- Current and former employees: Insights into the work environment

## POINTS TO LEARN ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

- Full name
- Location (headquarters and divisions, branches, subsidiaries, or other units)
- Ownership (public or private; whether it is owned by another company)
- Age and brief history
- Products and services
- Industry position (whether the company is a leader or a minor player; whether it is an innovator or more of a follower)
- Key financial points (such as stock price and trend, if a public company)
- Growth prospects (whether the company is investing in its future through research and development; whether it is in a thriving industry)

## POINTS TO LEARN ABOUT THE POSITION

- Title
- Functions and responsibilities
- Qualifications and expectations
- Possible career paths

- Salary range
- Travel expectations and opportunities
- Relocation expectations and opportunities

## Common interview questions

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Questions about your college:

1. What courses in college did you like most? Least? Why?
2. Do you think your extracurricular activities in college were worth the time you spent on them? Why or why not?
3. When did you choose your college major? Did you ever change your major? If so, why?
4. Do you feel you did the best scholastic work you are capable of?
5. How has your college education prepared you for this position?

QUESTIONS ABOUT EMPLOYERS AND JOBS

6. What jobs have you held? Why did you leave?
7. What percentage of your college expenses did you earn? How?
8. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
9. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
10. What do you think about how this industry operates today?
11. Why do you think you would like this particular type of job?
12. If someone is older than you and is working under you how will you manage?

QUESTIONS ABOUT PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES

13. Do you prefer to work any specific geographic location? If so, why?
14. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good organization?
15. What personal characteristics do you feel are necessary for success in your chosen field?
16. Tell me a story.
17. Do you like to travel?
18. Why should I hire you?

QUESTIONS ABOUT WORK HABITS

19. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
20. What type of boss do you prefer?
21. Have you ever had any difficulty getting along with colleagues or supervisors? With instructors? With other students?
22. What would you do if you were given an unrealistic deadline for a task or project?
23. How do you feel about overtime work?

## 25 attributes that interviewers don't like to see

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1. Poor personal appearance
2. Overbearing, overaggressive, or conceited demeanor; a "superiority complex"; a know- it-all attitude
3. Inability to express ideas clearly; poor voice, diction, or grammar
4. Lack of knowledge or experience
5. Poor preparation for the interview
6. Lack of interest in the job
7. Lack of planning for career; lack of purpose or goals
8. Lack of enthusiasm; passive and indifferent demeanor
9. Lack of confidence and poise; appearance of being nervous and ill at ease
10. Insufficient evidence of achievement
11. Failure to participate in extracurricular activities
12. Overemphasis on money; interest only in the best money offer
13. Poor scholastic record; just got by
14. Unwillingness to start at the bottom; expecting too much too soon.
15. Tendency to make excuses
16. Evasive answers; hedging on unfavorable factors in record.
17. Lack of tact
18. Lack of maturity
19. Lack of courtesy; being ill mannered
20. Condemnation of past employers
21. Lack of social skills
22. Marked dislike for schoolwork
23. Lack of vitality
24. Failure to look interviewer in the eye
25. Limp, weak handshake